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COUNTRY: India

SUBJECT: Communist Inspired Seamen's and Dockworkers' Strike/Labor Disturbances/Violence and Rioting

PLACE ACQUIRED: 25X1A6a

DATE ACQUIRED:

DATE: Jul 53

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SOURCE:

- 25X1X
1. The strike called by the Seamen's Union, which I understand to be a Communist organization, against Socony-Vacuum Oil Company was in full swing during my visit [REDACTED]. It seems that the Indian Government maintains a clearing point through which all seamen are hired and then given physical examinations. All this is done in Bombay and it serves all of India. However, due to widespread venality among the examiners who conduct the physical examinations, all sorts of misfits and physically disqualified persons pass this examination. Socony-Vacuum hires these seamen thus passed and then runs them through its own physical examination with the net result that at least 50% of such employees are rejected for physical disabilities. Because of this extremely large number of rejections, the Seamen's Union has charged foul play and has gone on strike, with regular picket lines. I understand that this happens constantly. On 4 Jul 53 the strikers were out in front of the Socony-Vacuum office with two rather large black flags and with signs reading, "Down with Socony-Vacuum." There were a number of policemen present so all was quiet. On Friday, 3 Jul 53, one of the newly recruited seamen was attacked as he walked out of the Socony-Vacuum office. One of the strikers walked up to him and hit him on the head before the police could intervene. The net result was one broken head and two seamen jailed. From what I have seen of the jails in India, I believe that, if I had any preference in a case such as this, I would prefer a broken head to a term in jail, however short.
 2. The Anchor Steamship Line has its Bombay office in the Neville House as does Nowjororse Wadia Ginning and Pressing Company, Ltd. On my visit to the latter office, I encountered striking dockworkers out in front, chanting and standing around. The police were there and had a walk-way cleared to the building. The strikers seemed a bit curious about me, my brief case and everything about me in general, but nothing overt happened and, although several of them addressed me, I could not understand what they were saying, even though I was told that some of it was in English.
 3. I understand that violence in the small villages in India is the general order of the day. This violence seems to be quite widespread but is generally regarded as the usual course of events. Typical of these episodes was the raid on the village of Chidi by a notorious outlaw, or Dacoit, by the name of Nathia and his armed gang. They raided the village and escaped with a large plunder. In the encounter one villager was killed and another seriously injured.

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- 2 -

25X1X 4. Speaking of violence, the Hindu Sikhs have a warlike tradition and have been
25X1X regular soldiers in India for years. In Nander I visited the Sikh Temple and
the shrine which has been built around the tomb of one of the great Sikh holy
men [REDACTED]

1708.7 I mention all this because I understand that Sikhs from all parts of
India come here to worship and it is considered their mecca. Recently the
police chief of the Nander District raided the shrine and found concealed
therein a great number of illegal guns and ammunition. He entered the temple
and informed the head man that he knew of all the smuggled arms and wanted
them turned over to him. After a few minutes of thought, the head man
surrendered them to him. In my opinion, it took pure raw courage to walk
into a lion's den like that.

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